

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 05516 101456Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 5516

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, RP
SUBJECT: EXPLORATORY APPROACHES REGARDING POLITICAL ASYLUM

REF: MANILA 5513, MANILA 5462, STATE 089291

1. CPAO AND CAO APPROACHED AT CHANCERY APRIL 10 ON QUESTION OF ASYLUM FOR MS. CHARITO PLANAS, VOCAL LABAN CANDIDATE WHO IS NOW IN HIDING, BY GABBY LOPEZ, HER CAMPAIGN MANAGER. LOPEZ STATED: "I MIGHT AS WELL SAY IT BLUNTLY--CHARITO WANTS TO KNOW ABOUT ASYLUM. SHE THINKS SHE'LL BE KILLED IF SHE GOES BACK INTO JAIL." LOPEZ SAID PLANAS HAS THREE OPTIONS: A) GIVE SELF UP TO GOP AUTHORITIES; B) GO UNDERGROUND WITH THE HELP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES; SHE WOULD THEN BE TAKEN TO A SAFE HIDING PLACE IN CENTRAL LUZON; AND C) FLEE COUNTRY, POSSIBLY TO HONG KONG AS TRANSIT POINT. CPAO INDICATED IT IS NOT US POLICY TO GRANT ASYLUM.

2. LOPEZ VOLUNTEERED THAT COMMUNISTS WOULD PROBABLY WELCOME HER TAKING SECOND OPTION SINCE THEY COULD THEN CAPITALIZE ON IT. PRESSED, HE SAID CP HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN CAMPAIGN, AS ACTIVE AS LABAN WOULD ALLOW, AND HAD ATTEMPTED TO PRESSURE PLANAS TO SPEAK OUT ALONG CP LINES. IN LOPEZ VIEW, THIS IS BECAUSE SHE WAS MOST EFFECTIVE SPEAKER LABAN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MANILA 05516 101456Z

HAD. LOPEZ DID NOT INDICATE WHETHER PLANAS ACCEDED TO THIS PRESSURE.

3. LOPEZ SAID PRIVATE TRANSPORT OUT OF COUNTRY PROBABLY COULD BE ARRANGED. HE SAID PLANAS HAVING INCREASING DIFFICULTY HIDING BECAUSE OF FEAR BY FRIENDS THAT SHE MIGHT BE DISCOVERED IN THEIR HOME. HIS VIEW IS THAT SITUATION

IS NOW CRITICAL.

4. LOPEZ SAID HE DOES NOT KNOW HOW LONG HE HIMSELF WILL BE ABLE TO MOVE FREELY. IF PLANAS REMAINS FREE, HE SAID, AUTHORITIES MAY COME AFTER HIM AS HER CAMPAIGN MANAGER. ACCORDINGLY, HE HIMSELF IS CONSIDERING FLEEING COUNTRY. CPAO AND CAO LISTENED SYMPATHETICALLY BUT INDICATED USG IN NO POSITION TO OFFER ASSISTANCE OR MAY ANY COMMITMENTS.

5. LOPEZ LEFT THE EMBASSY, RETURNING SHORTLY AFTER A CONVERSATION WITH BOY PLANAS, A NEPHEW OF CHARITO. LOPEZ RELATED THAT BOY HAD TOLD HIM CHARITO WAS NOT TRYING THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES TO CONTACT MERIN FERIA AND LUMEN TIAOQUI, CONTACTS OF RAUL MAGLAPUZ WHO ARE THOUGHT TO HAVE HAD A PART IN THE ESCAPE FROM THE PHILIPPINES LAST YEAR OF SERGIO OSMENA AND EUGENIO LOPEZ. HOWEVER, IF ESCAPE FROM THE COUNTRY APPEARED IMPOSSIBLE, CHARITO PLANS TO SURRENDER EITHER TO GENERAL FIDEL RAMOS, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE AFP WHO APPARENTLY IS A FRIEND, OR TO SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ENRILE. SHE WILL AVOID SURRENDERING TO GENERAL OLIVAS, PC COMMANDER, WHOM SHE APPARENTLY FEARS.

6. ABOUT HIMSELF LOPEZ ADDED THAT HE WAS DUE IN LONDON APRIL 15 ON A BRITISH COUNCIL GRANT. HE SUGGESTED HE MIGHT, IF ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE PHILIPPINES, SEEK A VISA TO THE U.S. FROM LONDON, RATHER THAN RETURNING DIRECTLY, TO WAIT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MANILA 05516 101456Z

UNTIL THE SITUATION HERE STABILIZES.

7. IN SEPARATE APPROACH EVENING APRIL 10, EMBASSY RECEIVED TELEPHONE CALL FROM SISTER AND BROTHER-IN-LAW OF LABAN CANDIDATE, FORMER SENATOR MACEDA, INQUIRING ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF U.S. GRANTING POLITICAL ASYLUM TO MACEDA. MACEDA'S RELATIVES EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT HIS POSSIBLE ARREST IN LIGHT OF OTHER LABAN CANDIDATES. AS IN PLANA' CASE, EMBASSY WILL INFORM MACEDA RELATIVES IT IS U.S. POLICY NOT TO GRANT ASYLUM.
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